

REMARKS

Applicants have carefully considered the Final Office Action of August 1, 2008. Claims 11-24 are currently pending. Claims 11, 21 and 24 have been amended to refine and more clearly define that which Applicants consider to be their invention. Claims 18 and 23 have been cancelled. No new matter has been added by Applicants' amendments.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 11-20 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement, because the Examiner stated that the limitations of "...a thickness between about 200 μ m to 2 cm..." and "...a thickness between about 10 μ m and 200 μ m..." in claims 11 and 24 respectively, are not disclosed in the specification. Applicants have amended claims 11 and 24, thus rendering the rejections moot. Applicants therefore request withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 15 and 16 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite because the Examiner alleges that the term "and copolymers or blends of the foregoing" is not clear. Applicants maintain that the language is not indefinite

when read in view of Applicants' specification. However, solely to advance prosecution of this application, Applicants have amended claims 15 and 16 to recite "...and blends thereof of cellulose derivatives, polysaccharides, polyvinyl pyrrolidone, polyvinyl alcohol, polyacrylic acid, poly(methyl vinyl ether/maleic anhydride), poly(meth)acrylic acid, and polyethylene glycol.", as suggested by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Examiner rejected claims 11-24 as obvious, over USP Application 2001/0044482 to Hu et al., in view of USP 5,844,016 to Sawhney et al. The Examiner asserts that Hu et al. disclose all of the elements of the claimed composition, except for the use of a water soluble peroxydisulphate photoinitiator, which is disclosed by Sawhney et al. Therefore, according to the Examiner, it would have been *prima facie* obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to combine the compositions of Hu et al. and Sawhney et al. to arrive at Applicants' claimed invention. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants have amended claims 11 and 24 to recite specific features related to the selection of the cross-linking

agent, and the concentration or photoinitiator, to further refine what Applicants consider to be the invention. As the Examiner admits at page 3 of the Final Office Action, the data presented in the Declaration of Madsen, at pages 12-14, show that Applicants' method produced unexpected results in view of the prior art, and as such, Applicants' claims, as now amended, cannot be considered to be *prima facie* obvious. Applicants, therefore, respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all currently outstanding rejections, and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

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Respectfully submitted,

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